



PIRATES OF PENZANCE.

A Very Meritorious Performance by Ypsilanti Local Talent.

There is always an opportunity for criticism even with the best professional opera troupes, and it is not to be expected that young people who only sing in an opera occasionally can be in all ways the equal of their professional brethren. Of the work done by the young people who performed Gilbert and Sullivan's well-known opera "Pirates of Penzance" at the Ypsilanti opera house for the first time last evening far less can be said in criticism than of most amateur professors. There was not that dragging slowness which oppresses nearly all amateur performances, and several of the parts were as well taken as by professionals. The choruses most especially were strong their work being splendid in every instance.

In the individual parts, the work of Mrs. Chas. W. Glover, Miss Abba Owen and Mr. John Dodge was especially fine.

Mrs. Glover, as Mabel, did some very effective singing in her solos, and the duet with Frederic in the second act was one of the best pieces in the opera. Mrs. Glover has a splendid voice, perfectly under control and her singing is very pleasing.

Miss Abba Owen was well cast as Ruth. Miss Owen's voice lacks the strength necessary for operatic singing, which indeed was the noticeable defect of nearly all the soloists, but otherwise her singing was good and her action fine. Her duet with Frederic in the first act was especially pleasing.

John Dodge, as Frederic, a pirate's apprentice, had a great deal of work and acquitted himself very creditably. With more practice Mr. Dodge could develop his voice to the requirements of the operatic stage, but he certainly did well last night. He was especially good in his duets with Mabel and Ruth.

F. J. Swaine, as Major General Stanley, was better in his action than in his singing, and F. J. Dansingburg made a fair pirate chief. R. A. Whitehead and his squad of police came in for a good share of applause. E. A. Wallace, as a pirate lieutenant, had a solo in the second act which he sang very well. His part did not give him much opportunity to show his well known abilities as there was little solo work in it.

The Misses Louise George and Adeline Rowley had a little solo work as Gen. Stanley's daughters. Their voices were weak, but quite sweet.

The work of the Chequamegon orchestra deserves special praise. They held themselves down well to the voices and did well throughout. Mrs. W. S. Pack, as accompanist on the piano, could not be criticised. Credit must also be given to Stage Manager Hemphill for having things so well arranged that there was no hitch in the program.

One thing in the chorus work which might be corrected was the by-play of the pirates in the first act which became so noisy at times as to interfere with the soloists.

H.S. 561 (Archives)
5/13/1971